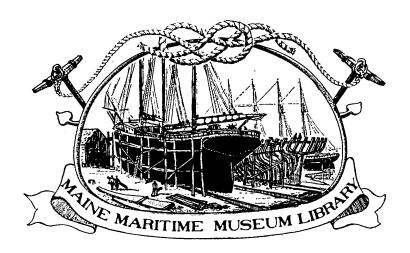
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Captain John E. Lindsey (1850-1919)

Manuscript, My Life Afloat and Ashore: The Life of Captain John E. Lindsey, 1900

by Sally E. Bartlett

July 2006

Shelf feet: 0.5 Number of volumes: 3

This inventory is the product of an internship funded by Smith College

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Abstract

Lindsey, John E., *Captain* (1850-1919)

Manuscript, My Life Afloat and Ashore: The Life of Captain John E. Lindsey, 1900.

Three volumes.

Captain from Portland, Maine.

Two of the three volumes are a handwritten copy of this autobiography. The third volume is a revised, bound, and mimeographed copy of the handwritten volumes. The autobiography follows Captain Lindsey from his birth at Little Harbor Beach on Mount Desert Island through his fiftieth birthday. It is full of vessel names and homeports including both Maine and non-Maine vessels and places. Over the course of the manuscript, Captain Lindsey chronicles his trips mentioning islands and ports visited. These landmarks are mostly New England, but also include ports ranging from Canada to Cuba.

Purchase, 1991.

91.73

Added Entries: **Dirigo** (Steamer); **Forest City** (Steamer); **Lizzie J. Clark** (Schooner); **Marjorie** (Steamer); **Norma** (Steam Yacht); **Olive Elizabeth** (Schooner); Lindsey, John E, Captain; Lindsey, Clara Randall; Philbrook, Maud Lindsey; Randall, Abner, Captain; Maine Central Railroad; Merchant Seamen-Diseases; Shipwrecks; Yacht Racing; Bangor, ME; Bar Harbor, ME; Harrington, ME; Portland, ME; Baltimore, MD; Boston, MA; Cape Cod, MA; Nantucket Shoals, MA; New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Providence, RI; Vineyard Haven, MA.

Foreword

The processing of this collection was made possible through a summer internship provided by Smith College and the Maine Maritime Museum for work in the library collections. Sally E. Bartlett processed this collection and it was edited and supervised by the Library Director, Nathan R. Lipfert.

Introduction

These handwritten and typewritten versions of Captain John E. Lindsey's life, My Life Afloat and Ashore: The Life of Captain John E. Lindsey, were purchased in 1991 from a rare book dealer in New York. The handwritten copy, which is made up of two notebooks, is not bound well (or at all) and is therefore very fragile. The typed copy is bound in a report style cover with metal bindings, in good condition, and is very readable.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on the use of the Captain John E. Lindsey manuscript.

Historical Note

Captain John E. Lindsey was born in the month of October 1850 at Little Harbor Beach on Mount Desert Island, Maine. Captain Lindsey was born one of eight boys and had two sisters. He was educated at the local schools as a young boy in Mount Desert Island and Harrington, Maine and then was tutored at his family home at Pineos Point.

Throughout his childhood, his family lived by the Atlantic Ocean and the desire to live on the sea was always present. His first glimpse of life at sea came while he was living with his eldest brother, Edward, and his wife, Abby (Wescott) Lindsey. Edward Lindsey worked as a cook on the ship **Ezra Williams**.

Soon after, Captain John E. Lindsey and another brother found work on the brig, **Eva N. Johnson**, which offered him his first experience working on the water. He began his life as a seaman at an early age and worked on many vessels in several capacities. As a young man he received his pilot's license from the Portland district Inspectors of Steam Vessels. Over the course of the autobiography, he traveled to New York, South Carolina, Florida, and the French West Indies. During his travels he experienced everything from drunken ship owners to shipwrecks and everything in between.

On Christmas night (year unknown), he married Clara E. Randall of Harrington, Maine. Her father, Captain Abner Randall, was a prominent shipmaster out of Portland during the late 19th century. Captain Lindsey and his wife had one daughter, Maud. She grew up in Portland with her mother while her father was at sea. Maud later married Ralph Philbrook of Portland and moved to Everett, Massachusetts.

Captain Lindsey is listed in the Portland Directory, years 1875 through 1919, as living on the following streets (in this order): Wilmot, Cedar, Clark, Howard, Beckett, Atlantic, Merrill, and again Atlantic. Along with the address, his occupation is also listed in the Portland Directory. The Directory states that from 1875-1883, Lindsey is employed as a mariner. For the years 1884-1885 Lindsey is employed as watchman of the steamer Tremont. From 1886-1889 John E. Lindsey's residence is listed, but there is no occupation next to his name and from 1890-1902 his occupation is listed as master mariner. It should be noted that the entry in the 1896 Directory states that John E. Lindsey moved to Everett, Massachusetts which is where his daughter lived at that time. Captain and Mrs. Lindsey moved back to Portland in 1897 and he is listed again in the 1897 Portland Directory as a master mariner. Due to the fact that the Lindseys moved to New York, John E. Lindsey is not listed in the Portland Directory for years 1903 and 1904. In 1905 the Lindseys moved back to Portland, and he is listed as a pilot. Then from 1906 until 1909 Lindsey is listed as a master mariner. From 1910 until 1915, John E. Lindsey is listed as a pilot for the SS Camden, then from 1916-1917 on the steamer **North Star.** In 1918 Captain Lindsey is simply listed as being employed as a pilot. January 15, 1919 Captain John E. Lindsey passed away. The 1919 Directory states that his widow, Clara E. (Randall) Lindsey, continued living at 90 Atlantic after his death.

Scope and Content

This autobiography by Portland Captain, John E. Lindsey, chronicles the life of a Maine seaman as he begins his career as a deck hand and becomes a certified pilot, as well as master of several vessels. This collection is not made up of papers and correspondence, but rather it is a story of a Maine captain's life.

This manuscript contains the events of steam and sailing coasting vessels and their voyages on the Atlantic. The only international voyages are to the West Indies and Canada. This autobiography also gives a detailed insight to the life of a Maine seaman. Unfortunately, Captain John E. Lindsey's autobiography has few dates, which makes recreating a chronology of his life extremely difficult. In addition to the lack of dates, there is little known about this Captain from Portland, Maine other than the Portland Directory and this autobiography. In this collection you will find descriptions of life at sea, travels along the north Atlantic coast, and life in Portland during the late 19th and early 20th century.

Reference Sources

The Portland Directories years 1875-1919 were helpful in tracking Captain John E. Lindsey when he lived in Portland. These directories are available in the Research Library at the Maine Historical Society in Portland, Maine.

William Avery Baker's *A Maritime History of Bath, Maine and the Kennebec River Region* was used to identify some of the vessels included in the autobiography.

The following books and maps were used in identifying places: Better Boating Association, Inc. Chart Kit, *Block Island, RI to the Canadian Boarder*, *United States Coast Pilot Atlantic Coast Section A and B*, and Delorme's Map of Maine.

Located in the PC-3 collection are images of some of the vessels noted in Captain Lindsey's autobiography.

Index Description

This index has been broken up into five parts with part five having two sub categories. The significant information in the manuscript volumes has been added to one of the categories listed below:

- I. Vessels
- II. Identified People
- **III. Business and Organizations**
- IV. Subjects
- V. Places
 - A. Maine
 - B. Non-Maine

- Part I. Vessels: This category includes any sea going vessel that Captain Lindsey mentions in his autobiography, whether he traveled on it or not.
- Part II. Identified People: This category includes any names mentioned in this autobiography. I have also included people mentioned with no first name (e.g. Captain Smith).
- Part III. Businesses and Organizations: There are only a few businesses and organizations mentioned in these manuscript volumes, but I have listed them in this category regardless of whether they are Maine or non-Maine.

Part IV. Places:

- A. Maine: This category is made up of every island, town, or city located in Maine that Captain Lindsey mentions in his autobiography.
- B. Non-Maine: This category is made up of every island, town or city that is not located in Maine, but is mentioned by Captain Lindsey in his autobiography.

There is also a table of contents, which precedes this index. Captain John E. Lindsey did not originally create this table of contents. It was written up during the course of processing this collection to help with organization.

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